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April 13, 1966

Mr. Alfred Friendly
Associate Editor
The Washington Post
1315 L. St., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Friendly,

Busy as you were, and with my car about to be towed away, we had only a few minutes today. I was able in this brief period to indicate only some of the collateral interest the Post might find in my book. There is another serious one that I regard as sufficiently important to write you about even though you are busy. It involves the Kennedy family, which is innocently engaged in an endeavor which I fear will be something less than a credit to the memory of the President, the two Senators and possibly to the national honor.

None of this is in the book. I mentioned it briefly to Anthony Howard. If you stay busy, I should like the opportunity to discuss it with Mr. Bradlee who, unless my recollection is in error, was a friend of the late President. I can cover it sketchily in five minutes, adequately in ten.

It seems to me quite possible that considerably less checking than Tom Hicker indicated will satisfy you. For example, is it really necessary to check to see if I erred in saying Oswald did not unload his property when his wife moved from New Orleans to Dallas? He was not with his wife and property but in New Orleans, preparing to leave for Mexico. Or to check and see whether Marina did say she a) never ate breakfast and b) always let her sleep late while he made his own. Even more minor points are carefully footnoted - for history, for credibility, and perhaps even for another inquiry. On the other hand, there are things that are of real importance - such as J. Edgar Hoover's report on the "missed" bullet and his completely false testimony that the assassin did not shoot while the Presidential car was approaching because there were trees in the way (whereas there was absolutely nothing), or the true story of the "found" bullet, and most of the items in the Chapter "The Doctors and The Autopsy". I can help here, for my copies of the Report and the appended volumes are marked in red China marker. If and when you get to where you want to check, my wife and I will work with our books and your people and find whatever they want. I believe we can do it faster. You will, I am confident, find this a less arduous task than you seem to anticipate.

After receiving your letter of March 25 I spoke to Larry Stern, before I saw you. He said he was still kept pretty busy and he had no idea when he could read the book. Although I found this less than encouraging, as I had his failure to read it in ten weeks, whereas most of the senior and executive editors in the publishing houses read it within two days - some overnight - I readily agreed with you today, even though, as I said, this may be unfair to both him and me. At least I do hope you will accept this as an expression of willingness to subject the book to any reasonable test.

In The Post's interest and mine, I hope he will be able to finish it at an faster rate. My offer to you extends to him: I will come in at any time and make anything clear or answer any questions or display any proofs.

To clarify what Tom Wicker told you, the book is under favorable consideration at W.W.Norton, where the president read it rapidly and passed it on to the vice-president and executive editor, who has, from about Christmas time, been anxious to do it. Others there, unknown to me, wondered if it was a fair representation or subject to easy refutation. I was not informed of this until two weeks ago, when they confessed they were seeking a person intimately familiar with the fact who had formed an opinion! Naturally, they failed to find such a mental sunnuch. I suggested they question Mr. Wicker and several of the other correspondents and legislative assistants who had read it. This they did, and I am now waiting to hear from them.

Further, it is under consideration in England, where the decision was to have been made today. The prospective publisher had told me he found the book "intriguing" and was "enthusiastic" about its prospects. He gave it to two university dons to read. They were to report to him yesterday and there was to have been a board meeting today. A major British paper has asked him for first refusal. They have told me they have it. I have sent them a copy they are now reading or have read. Their Washington bureau has already read and praised the book. There are also other U.S. possibilities.

These are some of the things I had in mind in my previous letter in which I said that until I signed a contract I controlled the secondary rights. It is one of the reasons I am anxious to have The Post read it before I sign a U.S. contract.

Now I no longer wonder if the book will ever be responsibly printed. Instead I fear the timing, for reasons I indicated only briefly to you today. I am anxious for it to be first, for I know what other books are and say.

Sincerely

Harold Weisberg